

and Entrepreneurship Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 434 and the Senate then proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 434) to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through December 31, 2007, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand there is an amendment at the desk. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read three times, passed; the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; the title amendment be agreed to; and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the authorization of these small business programs expires tomorrow. The bill before us, H.R. 434, was received in the Senate on January 18. I don't understand why the committee has waited until the day before the program expires to act. If we amend this bill and send it back to the House, they will not be able to act before these programs expire.

It is my understanding that if we allow this authorization to lapse, it will result in the dissolution of the SBA's Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs. This committee serves veteran entrepreneurs by formulating, executing, and promoting policies that assist veterans seeking to start and develop small businesses. I cannot imagine why we would want to dissolve the committee designed to assist veterans who want to start their own small businesses.

Accordingly, I ask the Senator to modify the unanimous consent request to omit the Senate amendment and instead pass a bill clean so that it may go directly to the President for his signature.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in responding to my friend, Senators KERRY and SNOWE, who are the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Small Business, have indicated there are a lot of matters relating to small business jurisdiction that need to be completed forthwith. They are going to work on this next week and hope to have something done very quickly, but this gives them an opportunity to deal with the House, which, I am told, basically did not confer with them at all during the work they did over there, and they should have done that.

I say again, Senators KERRY and SNOWE understand the importance of this issue. They also know there are many other things depending on their raising this as an issue at this time.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if I may, I have been informed by Senator SNOWE, with all due respect to the majority leader, that is not her view. It may well be the view of Senator KERRY, but it is not the view of Senator SNOWE.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are checking at this time with Senator KERRY to see if we can work something out on this small business matter. In the meantime, we will move to another important issue that is before the Senate.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 11 through 13; the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid on the table en bloc, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

Irving A. Williamson, of New York, to be a Member of the United States International Trade Commission for the term expiring June 16, 2014.

Dean A. Pinkert, of Virginia, to be a Member of the United States International Trade Commission for the term expiring December 16, 2015.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Michael J. Astrue, of Massachusetts, to be Commissioner of Social Security for a term expiring January 19, 2013.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are glad we are able to clear three important nominations of the President.

HONORING THE LIFE, ACHIEVEMENT AND DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF THE REVEREND ROBERT J. DRINAN, S.J.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 66.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 66) honoring the life, achievement and distinguished career of the Reverend Robert J. Drinan, S.J.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today we pay our respects to a great son of Massachusetts who passed away on Sunday, an inspiration to me and a leader beloved by many, Father Robert Drinan.

In all his life's endeavors, from the church pulpit to the halls of Congress to the classroom, Father Drinan was guided by a firm and unwavering moral compass. He lived out in public life the whole cloth of Catholic teachings.

In religion and politics alike, he followed his sense that we are all put on this Earth for something greater than ourselves. Wherever he went, he was led there by a concern for the weak, the helpless, the downtrodden. In religion and politics alike, that was his calling.

And as he walked between these worlds, on a path unique in our Nation's history, he was always unmistakably and wonderfully true to himself.

Father Drinan was a forever gentle, resilient, tenacious advocate for social justice and fundamental decency. In the most divisive days of Vietnam, when things were coming apart, this incredible man, this most unlikely of candidates, showed America how a man of faith could be a man of peace.

As a politician, Father Drinan is best remembered for his spirited opposition to the Vietnam war. That's what brought him to Congress in the first place and it is how our paths first crossed. In 1970, after we first met as opponents in the Peoples' Caucus, I was honored to support, campaign, and to work with and learn from committed Democrats like Jerome Grossman, John Marttila, Tom Kiley, John Hurley, and Tom Vally. Together, many of these committed activists would spend the next decades championing the great progressive causes that marked the Drinan campaign.

Father Drinan's slogan was "Father Knows Best." I began studying law at Boston College—where Father Drinan had been the youngest law school Dean in the country—while he was down here, in Congress, making law, and making history.

Father Drinan's testimony against the war was remarkably powerful. He toured jails in Saigon and met a South Vietnamese politician there who had been jailed after placing second in an